

that I have been a consistent champion of federalism and localism, self-rule.

He and I agree that those principles are important. My friend from Delaware, being a former Governor himself, understands the sovereignty of the States and the need to respect their judgment.

This is a different circumstance here than that. This would absolutely be inappropriate for us, in any other circumstance, to tell a State or any political subdivision of any State—a city, town, a county, any other subunit of one of our 50 sovereign States—it would be inappropriate for us to weigh in on a local policy issue like this. It is, in fact, part of our constitutional design that each State and each community within each State needs to be able to express itself and make its own decisions based on its own unique preferences.

Here is a very significant difference with respect to the District of Columbia. It has its own provision of the Constitution—in fact, its own clause in article I, section 8, known as the enclave clause. This provision, found in article I, section 8, clause 17, gives Congress exclusive legislative jurisdiction over what we now call the District of Columbia. It wasn't called that in 1787, when they wrote this. It hadn't yet been designed, created, but it described the area to be created out of land donated by one or more States, no more than 10 miles square that would serve as the seat of our national government.

There was an understanding the Founding Fathers had that the seat of government ought not be under the control of any single State, but rather it ought to be in a special status. To that end, the Founding Fathers put ultimate legislative jurisdiction in the hands of Congress, not in that district itself, not in the hands of the States that donated the land to create it, but in Congress.

Now, the DC Home Rule Act, of course, gives substantial authority to the DC City Council and Mayor. As it relates to this legislation, it gives the DC government 30 business days after the passage and enrollment of this legislation, and in that 30 business-day period, Congress has the ability to disapprove of that legislation, which would stop it from being implemented when it is set to take effect on March 18.

Let's remember what we are talking about here. We are talking about the most basic fundamental choice that a parent has relative to his or her child: the authority and the discretion to decide when, whether, how, and under what circumstances and what time certain medical procedures may be performed on the child. You might disagree with the medical judgment of a particular parent and at a particular moment, but I am not aware of any State that would make the decision on a statewide basis to take this choice away from parents and to say that a child as young as 11 years old could

make his or her own choice and not only deprive a child's parents from being able to make that decision but also be able to deprive that child's parents from ever even learning about it. These things are sometimes not without consequence.

Imagine, for example, a circumstance in which the parents are aware of some particular medical condition, a medical procedure that this child has recently had. Imagine circumstances in which a child's siblings or the child him or herself had previously reacted to a particular vaccination in a particular way or imagine a circumstance in which religious considerations come into play. Do we really want to deprive parents of the ability to make that decision?

I am not aware of any State legislature that would make that choice. I certainly hope they wouldn't. But regardless, and even though this would not be our choice, this would not be within our authority if it were not within the District of Columbia and, therefore, within our plenary legislative jurisdiction under the enclave clause to make this decision from Congress. It is our decision here because, at the end of the day, the DC government itself is acting on authority delegated to it by the Congress.

So whether you like it or not, whether you like, in the abstract, the idea of localism either as embodied in federalism or even more generally than that, you can't escape the fact that under our constitutional system, we are the lawmaker for DC, no less than any State's legislature is the legislative body for that State. If you choose not to decide here, you still have made a choice. You still have made a choice to approve of that legislative body stripping away critical protections, critical rights that parents have. We have made that decision not just because it sounds like the right thing to do, but anyone who has ever been a parent understands that it has to be the parent's choice. A parent has to be in a position of making these decisions and, at least, for crying out loud, be made aware of this. This takes away not only their authority or their rights but even their awareness of what has happened to their child.

So, yes, I understand the concerns of localism. They simply don't apply here.

Under our constitutional system, under the Constitution itself, the document to which we all have sworn an oath to uphold, protect, and defend, this is not a State decision.

To the extent it is a decision for the DC government, for the DC City Council, and Mayor, that is authority that we have delegated to the District, and it is authority that is ultimately ours. We are ultimately answerable to the people, to those who have elected us, to make sure that is exercised responsibly.

So if you don't like the fact that we are doing this—for that matter, if you don't like the policy of this, if you as a State lawmaker wouldn't be com-

fortable with this policy being adopted in your State—you have not only every right and every authority, but I believe you have a moral obligation to stand up to this piece of legislation. Do not let this kick in on March 18. This is wrong. It is not something we have to accept, and it is certainly not something that the Constitution even allows, much less compels.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MURPHY). The Senator from West Virginia.

TRIBUTE TO DONNA BOLEY

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. President, today I rise to speak on a couple of topics, but first, I want to take this opportunity to thank really an icon in our State, and that is West Virginia State Senate Pro Tempore Donna Boley. She is a good friend of mine, and she is now in her 10th term. She is the longest continuously serving member in our State's State senate. At one point in history, Donna Boley was the only Republican. She was the ranking member on every single committee and the lead Republican, as she was the only one in the early nineties.

I want to thank her for her service, for her service to our State, which began in 1985, and wish her all the best as she presides today—she is presiding today—over the West Virginia State Senate.

So, Donna, way to go. Really proud of you. You are a role model for every woman who is watching and certainly young girls as well.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. President, I also rise to join my colleagues to discuss the Democrats' so-called COVID-19 relief package.

Prior to this past round, Congress has been delivering much needed relief, as you know—five times since the beginning of this pandemic—with bipartisan support.

In this last month, my Republican colleagues and I put forth a targeted proposal, presented to President Biden in the Oval Office. He invited 10 of us over, and we had a great discussion. It wasn't just a plan, but it was a plan to work together, to be united and move forward in an area that we have had great bipartisan consensus.

Let's be clear. We don't disagree on the need for continued relief and resources, but it needs to be done in a targeted way. Throwing money randomly will not fix it, especially when some of these funds that are still being spent—that we speak of right now haven't been spent yet. And taking the opportunity to spend on favorite projects is not the intention of a COVID relief package.

In December of 2020—that wasn't that long ago, 2 months ago—we passed the most recent recovery efforts, which amounted to approximately \$900 billion in relief funds. President Biden's relief plan takes none of that into consideration. They don't take into full account a sufficient understanding that the impacts of that bill from just 2 months ago have yet to be felt. Instead, it force-feeds funds and radical